

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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NOV 13 1986

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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N-10,910

Property Name: J. Mason Farm

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The J. Mason Farm is located on the southwest side of Route 82 approximately 0.1 mile south of its junction with Way Road (Road 241). The nominated site occupies a portion of Parcel Number 08-009.00-051 containing approximately 12.5 acres. The site boundaries are delineated on the attached map titled, New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985.

UTM Reference: 18/444240/4405310

Owner: Mrs. Henry B. duPont
1004 Wilmington Trust Center
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Description:

The J. Mason Farm contains a dated 1827 stone house and a stone barn of the same period. These are the only buildings on the site; both contribute to the historic significance of the property.

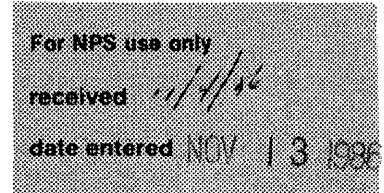
The house is a two story, gable-roofed, fieldstone building with a brick, interior end chimney in the east endwall (which is the location of the 1827 datestone, as well). The facade has an evenly spaced, three bay, side door configuration. Nine-over-nine sash windows with molded surrounds, lug sills, and raised four-panel shutters light the first floor, while six-over-six sash with louvered shutters light the second floor. The door frame has a paneled reveal and a four-light rectangular transom. The pedimented surround with three-light transom appears to be a twentieth century addition. The roof is covered with wood shingles and is edged by a molded box cornice. Abutted to the west endwall of the house is a two story, three bay, frame wing that may have been added in the 1930's or 1940's. Its Colonial Revival details, including weatherboard siding, six-over-six sash windows, and wood shingled, gable roof with dormers, does not disturb the architectural character of the original stone section.

The barn is a bi-level stone building with an incorporated stone straw shed and a frame front wall. The walls are uncoursed fieldstone finished with a pebbled stucco. The barn is situated on a very steep gradient, thus it has only a slight ramp with retaining walls which leads to the center bay entrance.

The upper level is tripartite in plan and is entered through the center bay double doors which are hung on rollers. The upper level is divided into three bays, both laterally and longitudinally. A frame wall physically separates the incorporated straw shed from the rest of the barn. There is a stair on the southeast side of the door.

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J. Mason Farm

UTM Reference:

- A 18/444350/4405360
- B 18/444200/4405220
- C 18/444090/4405360
- D 18/444280/4405500

These reference points are for mapping use. Actual boundaries are shown on the attached tax parcel map.

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The principal timbers are hewn, and the secondary members are vertical sawn.

The bent scheme is very unusual, an aberration even in this period of idiosyncratic bents. The bent consists of three posts with the ramp stone wall serving as the fourth support. The post on the frame, interior wall is flared and notched, and the girt is joined over the plate. The two inner bent posts are very large and are tapered from small at the top to large at the bottom. Mortises indicate that rails once interconnected the posts at a high and low level. Seated mortises on the interior face of the inner posts indicate very large rails or timbers crossed the threshing floor bay, in effect, making a square enclosure in the center of the barn. Lower mortises indicate that these cross timbers were probably braced. An enclosure such as this would have made the driveway function of the center bay useless. The nature or reason for this feature is not known. One detail does verify the fairly early date for this barn. On the northeast long wall the plate is spliced with an edge-halved scarf joint. This joint is found only in the dated 1809 William Morgan barn (N-326), and the circa 1760 William Phillips barn (N-4085). A scarf joint of this type was frequently used in the British Isles in the eighteenth century.

The roofing system consists of common rafters on principal purlins which are supported by angular, flared and notched struts emanating from the girt.

The original flooring system was replaced with lateral plank joists in the 1930's. The original lower level floor plan was also completely changed to accommodate caged horse stalls. Other 1930's additions are two cupolas atop the gable roof, and a stone wall with gates enclosing the barnyard on the northeast elevation.

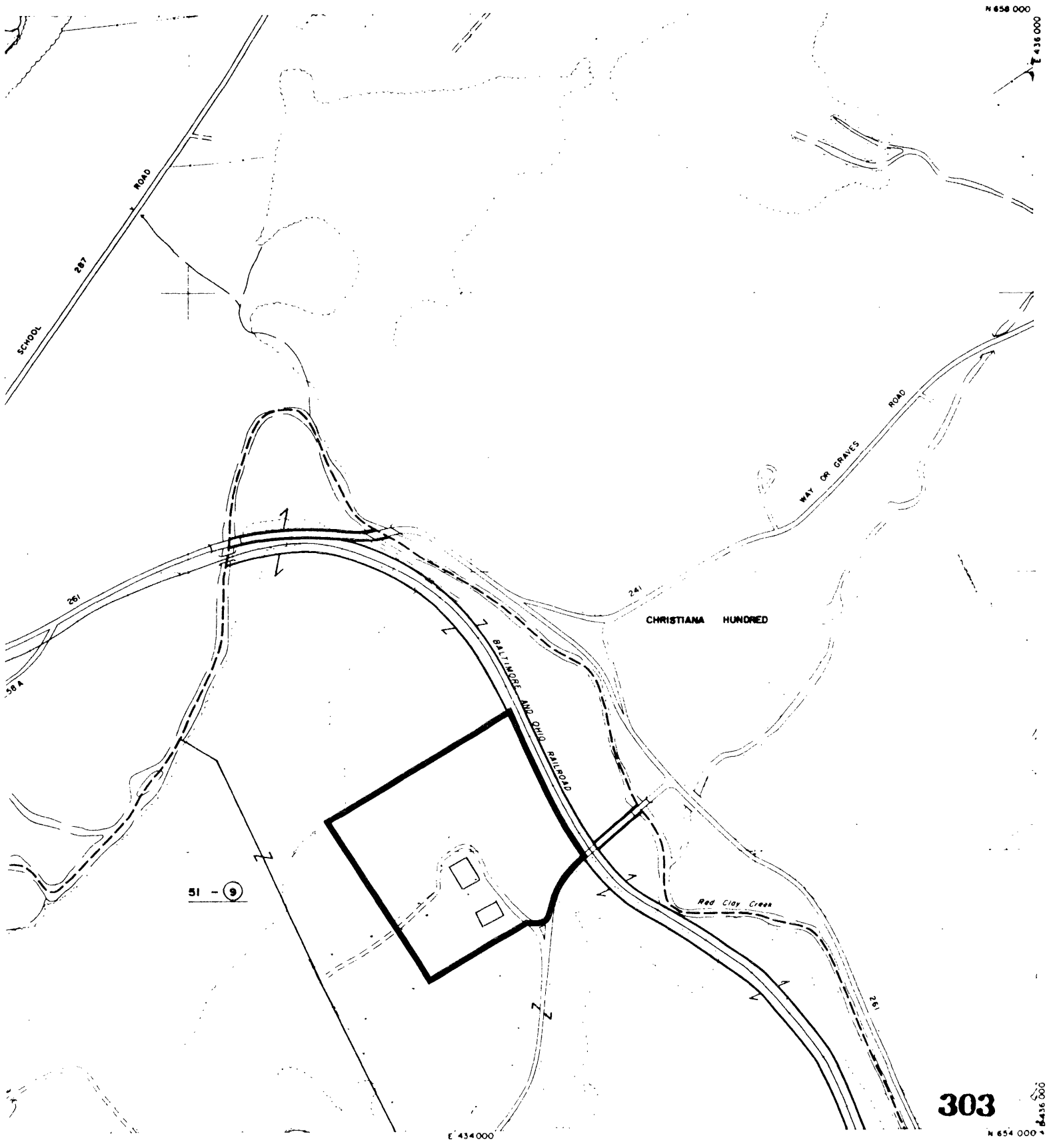
Significance:

The J. Mason Farm is significant under Criterion A as a recognizable element of a changing economic climate, and under Criterion C for the well-preserved regional building types it contains.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century great changes took place in Mill Creek Hundred resulting in a restructuring of the architectural landscape through the supplantation of log buildings by stone buildings. The large and impressive J. Mason barn is a symbol of that emerging social and economic order. The bank barn form was recognized as a multiple purpose building, but the Mason barn, because of its incorporated straw shed, increased its multiple purpose uses; perhaps to such an extent that no additions were needed in the late nineteenth century.

The upper level floor plan and bent scheme is quite a mystery. Certainly, it is unlike any other barn in the hundred. More research needs to be done to understand the function of such a design.

The J. Mason site has excellent integrity and is significant as a representative of that formative rebuilding period in Mill Creek Hundred.



1" = 100'

N-10,910 J. Mason Farm
New Castle County Property Tax Map, 1985
Parcel Number 08-009.00-051

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